

Kiss By Kiss by GhostGrantaire

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Summary:

Or, five times Steve Harrington kissed someone, and one time he didn't

Kiss By Kiss

1. May 1973

If anyone asked Steve Harrington who his first kiss was, he'd rack his brain for the name of some girl in middle school from a game of truth or dare.

But the truth was, Elliot came first.

Before middle school, before Carol came along, Steve's trio had consisted of Tommy Harding and Elliot Kowalski. Elliot was kind of dorky— Steve and Tommy had always known it. He wore big glasses that he always tried to ditch as soon as his mother was out of sight, and he never spoke up much unless somebody insulted him, but he was the fastest runner in the first grade, and he didn't take shit from anyone, so they let it slide.

“Nice glasses, Kowalski.”

Steve scowled as a third grader shoved Elliot backwards, raising his eyebrows challengingly. They didn't get picked on very often by older kids, but Steve had come to realize that a lot of that had to do with Tommy, who was currently in time-out. It wasn't unusual for him, but usually either Steve or Elliot was there with him. But today, Tommy had been the only one who'd talked back to the teacher, so the other two boys were left alone to their own devices during recess.

Out of the corner of his eye, Steve saw Elliot clench his fists, and he reacted immediately, yanking him away from the older kids. Steve had never gotten in a fight without Tommy there, and he really didn't trust him and Elliot to hold their own. He knew the other boy's bark was worse than his bite.

“Those morons,” Elliot grumbled as he grudgingly walked away. Steve raised his eyebrows. His mom hated him using language like that, but that was one of the things that was so cool about Elliot. He said whatever he wanted, but rarely ever got caught for it.

"Don't listen to them," Steve said as he pulled his friend away. Elliot huffed, kicking at the dirt, but followed anyway. They walked away slowly, wandering past the playground in silence. Eventually they came across a shady spot behind the portable and Steve sat down, finding a couple of pill bugs to play with out of boredom.

Elliot stayed standing, kicked at the side of the portable in irritation. Steve frowned at him after a moment, feeling bad.

"I like your glasses," Steve blurted out, and Elliot frowned at him. "They're cool."

Elliot paused and blinked over at him. After a second, his lips pulled up into a smile and he sat down beside his friend.

"Thanks. I like your hair. You should let it be longer. It'd be pretty." Elliot said, frowning at Steve's hair, which he'd just gotten cut the week before.

Steve made a face. "Boys aren't supposed to be pretty."

"Why not?" Elliot asked, picking some grass from the ground and crumbling it in his fists.

"Because that's weird," Steve said, raising his eyebrows.

"That's stupid," Elliot shot back, scowling. Steve didn't know why he was so angry. "My mom says I'm pretty."

"That doesn't count. She's your mom. She has to say you're pretty," Steve said, picking at the weeds.

"So you don't think I'm pretty?" Elliot threw back, that challenging look on his face that he always wore before doing something reckless. Steve dropped the handful of grass he was holding and blinked up at the other boy.

Elliot *was* pretty. If Steve looked at him the right way, he almost looked like a girl. He had long eyelashes and pink lips and his skin was really nice even when it was all scraped up and bruised from roughhousing. But Steve couldn't say that. Could he?

"I dunno," Steve mumbled. Elliot was frowning, so he continued. "I guess you are."

Elliot smiled, and Steve blushed at the look, averting his eyes. He didn't know why they were talking about this. He wondered what Tommy would say if he were here.

"Do you think girls like pretty boys?" Steve asked suddenly, though he wasn't sure why. He felt the need to save this conversation, and that seemed like a good way to do it.

Elliot made a face and shrugged. "I don't know. Probably. Why does that matter though? Girls are gross."

Steve frowned. "No they're not. They're nice."

Elliot shrugged again. "Whatever. I think they're annoying."

Steve just kept frowning and picked at the weeds some more. "Well you're never gonna get to kiss them if you talk like that," he mumbled, feeling strangely grumpy.

"Maybe I don't want to kiss them," Elliot shot back, raising his eyebrows.

Well that was a weird thing to say. Steve shot his friend a look. "That's a weird thing to say," he said out loud, at a loss for anything else to say.

Elliot shrugged, looking a bit nervous, which was unlike him. "I said maybe."

"Who do you want to kiss then?" Steve asked, though his brain was warning him to stop.

"I dunno," Elliot mumbled. He glanced up at Steve from beneath his eyelashes, and Steve was slightly struck by how pretty his green eyes were.

"You could kiss me," Elliot said after a second, and Steve blinked, realizing he was still staring. Elliot didn't look too concerned, but he was fidgeting in a way that Steve recognized as being unusual.

This was wrong. Steve had heard enough from his dad, and Tommy, and the rest of the world to know that this wasn't a good sign. But Elliot was still staring at him with that sense of challenge in his eyes that made Steve slightly less scared.

"I dare you," Elliot continued, not unkindly, and that was enough for him.

Steve leaned forward, pressing his lips clumsily to the other boy's. He kept his eyes open, searching for any reaction from Elliot, but the other boy just stayed still. They stayed there for exactly three seconds (Steve counted; Tommy had told him once that anything under three seconds didn't really count).

After the three seconds were over, Steve pulled back a few inches, breathing quickly as he looked at his friend. There were two bright spots of pink on Elliot's cheek, and Steve found himself staring against his will.

"How was that?" Steve asked after a second, louder than he meant to. Elliot shrugged, looking nervous. He took off his glasses and cleaned them on his shirt before sticking them back on his face.

"I liked it," Elliot decided after a second, looking at Steve nervously. "Did you?"

Steve nodded before he could stop himself. "Yeah. It was good."

Elliot smiled hesitantly, and Steve couldn't help but return it, feeling a bit giddy all of a sudden. They kept looking at each other for several moments, a few giggles escaping them.

"Hey, what are you two doing back here?" Tommy's loud voice made them both jump, and they looked up at him.

"Nothing," Steve yelped before Elliot could say anything. He jumped to his feet, dusting the dirt off his pants. "Ms. Smiley let you go already?"

"Yep," Tommy shot back with a grin, which would've looked cooler if he wasn't missing two of his baby teeth. Now he just looked like an old man, but the last time Steve had pointed that out, he'd punched

him, so Steve kept it to himself this time. “Come on, let’s go steal back our monkey bars.”

He took off running back towards the playground, and Steve glanced down to Elliot to make sure he was coming. Elliot’s hair was shiny in the sunlight, and he was squinting up at Steve.

“You coming?” Steve asked after a second, holding out a hand. Elliot smiled up at him and grabbed the hand, pulling himself to his feet.

“Race ya!” Elliot shouted, taking off, and Steve stared at him for a moment before sprinting after him.

2. July 1982

It was one of the hottest days of the summer, the temperature crawling into the nineties. Steve could feel his hair sticking to his forehead from sweat, and really he just wanted to go home and jump in his pool.

But then again, making out with Amy Porter in his car really wasn’t a bad way to spend his time.

His parents were both out of town, and they’d kill him if they knew he had the car out right now, especially considering he only had his learner’s permit. But Amy was a persuasive person, all big eyes and lingering hands that made Steve all too eager to comply. So when she’d shown up that summer morning and asked if they could go for milkshakes, he’d only lasted so long before grabbing the spare key from counter and opening the door to the BMW. And when she’d touched his knee and asked him to pull over off the side off the side of the road, he hadn’t taken long to do that either.

Now all of his anxiety about his parents had left his mind, replaced with a heady, determined desire. Amy was sitting on his lap, moving slowly against him. She pressed her mouth against his, and Steve could feel the residue of her red lipstick smear against his mouth.

Honestly, making out in cars looked way better than it felt. Steve felt cramped, and the seats really weren’t that comfortable. He wondered how anybody ever had sex in cars. How would you even take off your

clothes with this little space?

Steve lost that train of thought quickly as Amy grabbed his hands and set them on her waist, underneath her thin shirt, and he felt a jolt of excitement at the feeling of her skin against his hands.

Amy knew what she was doing, that much was clear. She was a whole year older than him and honestly, she probably knew more about all this stuff than Steve did, but he wasn't about to let that discourage him.

"Steve," Amy whispered in his ear, sending a shiver up his spine. "You can undo my bra if you want."

Steve pulled away to stare at her with a stunned expression, feeling adrenaline rush through his veins. She was watching him with raised eyebrows, looking slightly unimpressed, and Steve suddenly remembered that he probably shouldn't act so ecstatic about doing something so simple. He kissed her again and let his hands wander up

There was a sudden knock at the window, making both of them jump. He heard Amy's head hit the ceiling of the car, but she didn't complain, already scrabbling off of his lap and pulling her skirt down quickly.

Steve's eyes shot to the window, and he gulped when he saw a man in a brown police uniform standing outside. He closed his eyes, gathering his nerves before rolling down the window.

"Afternoon, officer," he greeted, trying to sound casual.

"What's your name, kid?" The officer asked roughly, clearly not impressed.

Steve rolled his eyes, unable to help himself. This was so stupid. "Steve Harrington."

"Harrington?" The man repeated, clearly recognizing the name. Steve wasn't surprised— he'd learned pretty quickly that his name held a certain weight in this town. "Sean Harrington's kid?"

"Yep," Steve replied, raising his eyebrows. There was a long pause, and Steve could feel himself starting to smirk a bit. He knew most of the people in Hawkins were scared of his dad— he *did* have a tendency to sue anyone who got on his bad side. Maybe this would work out just fine.

But the cop didn't back away like Steve had hoped. Instead, he glanced around at the car, eyebrows creased.

"Where'd you get the car?" The officer—Chief Hopper, according to his badge— asked gruffly. Steve glared at him. In spite of his slight apprehension of the situation, he was still irritated about being interrupted, and he really wanted to just get this all over with.

"From my driveway," Steve snarked back. Hopper narrowed his eyes, clearly picking up on Steve's attitude.

"So it's yours?" Hopper asked, looking around.

"Yes," Steve huffed, feeling his anger rise. "What's the problem?"

"So you drove it over here, then?" Hopper asked. Steve opened his mouth, ready to shoot back a passive aggressive affirmative when he caught himself. *Fuck*.

Hopper hummed, as if Steve's silence was unsurprising. "How old are you?"

Steve didn't falter under the gaze. He could do this. He got out of sticky situations all the time. His dad had taught him how to do that. It was all about being self-assured.

"Sixteen," he lied easily, hoping his confidence would throw him off. "What about you, old timer?"

The cop's scowl deepened, and Amy whispered his name in warning. Steve knew this was a bad idea, but he was starting to get nervous, and he didn't always have the best control over his actions when he got like this.

"You got an ID on you?" Hopper asked, his voice steady as he looked Steve straight in the eye.

Steve ignored the question. His heart was beating quickly, but no way he was going to give up now. "Why am I on trial here? Is there a new law that made it illegal to sit in your own car?"

The cop leaned in closer. "No, but there are laws against driving without a license, and lying to cops. ID, now."

Steve felt himself start to panic.

"What's the law against driving drunk?" Steve threw out, his lack of impulse control getting the best of him. "I mean, unless that's old beer I'm smelling on your clothes."

The cop's gaze darkened even more, and Steve suddenly realized that he may have made a mistake.

Before Steve knew what was happening, the cop had thrown open the driver's door and grabbed him by the shirt. Steve yelped as he got yanked out and thrown against the side of the car. Hopper glared at him, not letting go of Steve's collar.

"I'm getting real tired of rich entitled punks thinking they can treat people like scum just because they've got money," Hopper muttered angrily, glaring Steve down. Steve's anger was gone, or at least buried far beneath all of the fear that was suddenly clouding his brain. "You got something you want to say to me?"

Steve swallowed the sarcastic response that was ready to bubble out of him. "No, sir," he answered quietly, lowering his eyes.

"Really? You don't want to show off in front of your girlfriend some more? Show her how tough you are, talking down a cop?"

Steve felt bile and shame rise in his throat. He closed his eyes. "No, sir," he repeated, a bit louder this time.

"Do you have anything to say?" Hopper asked challengingly.

"I'm sorry, sir," Steve answered quickly, all of his pride having vanished the moment that door was yanked open.

"Good answer," Hopper growled before stepping back. He pointed a

stern finger towards Steve, who finally took a deep breath. "Don't move. I have handcuffs. Don't make me use them."

Steve gulped, keeping his eyes downcast as he obediently stayed still outside of the car.

"What's your name?" Hopper asked, looking through the door to where Amy was sitting. Steve listened uncomfortably as she answered, sounding frightened. Steve shut his eyes in embarrassment. Some date this turned out to be.

He listened in shame as Amy answered a couple more of Hopper's questions before the cop turned around to address his partner.

"Callahan, take Ms. Porter home. If her parents ask, just say you were giving her a ride. No need to turn this into anything." Hopper explained gruffly. Steve heard Amy climb out of the passenger's door, and he kept his head down, unable to look her in the eyes right then.

Hopper waited until Amy and the other officer had driven off in the car before he turned back to Steve.

"Surprised you haven't threatened me yet," Hopper mused, and Steve frowned at him in confusion. "Isn't this usually the time where you tell me your dad's gonna sue me if I take you in?"

Steve blanched at the mention of his father. "Please don't tell him," he blurted out before he could stop himself.

The officer blinked, clearly taken off guard. "What?"

"Please, *please*," Steve pleaded. He sounded pathetic, but if there was a chance it would help save his hide, he wasn't going to stop. "My dad cares more about this car than he cares about me. If he knew I took it out... he'd *murder* me."

He stressed the ending, hoping Hopper understood the situation. His father had been angry enough two years ago when Steve had broken his arm and he'd had to come home early from his trip to Ohio. If he had to come home now because Steve took out the BMW? The very idea made Steve sick to his stomach.

“Who’s at home right now?” Hopper asked after a beat. His voice was still gruff, but it wasn’t as angry as before. Steve stuffed his hands into his pockets, still nervous about everything.

“Nobody,” Steve mumbled back. “My mom’s on a trip, and my dad’s in a conference in Florida.”

He glanced at Hopper, who was frowning at him. “When are they getting back?”

Steve shrugged. “I don’t know, a few days.”

“Nobody’s watching you?” Hopper asked gruffly, sounding annoyed.

Steve glared at him, despite his anxiety. “I’m fifteen. I don’t need a babysitter.”

Hopper raised an eyebrow, glancing at the car behind them. “Maybe you do,” he pointed out, and Steve huffed a sigh, feeling embarrassed once again.

“Listen, I’m really sorry about all that stuff before. I know I was out of line, I just...” Steve stammered, trying to collect himself. “I’ll do anything, okay? I’ll... I’ll help you at work! I’ll file paperwork, or clean, or something like that. Anything, just— *please* don’t call my dad.”

There was a long pause, and Steve closed his eyes, not ready to hear the verdict. Goddammit, his dad was never going to let him drive again. Hell, he’d never let him leave the house again.

“Alright, fine,” Hopper growled after a second. Steve stared at him with wide eyes.

“Seriously?” He asked, stunned.

“I’ll let you off this one time,” Hopper explained, his voice still rough and gravelly. “Only because I didn’t technically catch you driving the car.”

“Shit, thank you so much—” Steve started, feeling a sigh of relief shake his body, but Hopper interrupted.

"But I swear, if I catch you driving this car without a license again, or talking back to a cop, or anything else, you'll be down at the station in handcuffs before you can even say your last name," Hopper warned, and Steve knew he was being completely truthful.

Steve nodded quickly. "You won't, I promise."

Hopper observed him for a second longer before taking a step back. "Alright, let's go back to the station."

"What?!" Steve yelped, feeling utterly betrayed.

Hopper just raised his eyebrows. "Well you said you wanted to file paperwork."

Steve groaned, head falling to his chest. This day really wasn't going as planned. "Okay, fine," he conceded, knowing better than to push his luck. He sighed and opened the door, sliding in behind the steering wheel.

Hopper made a noise of disbelief from outside the car. "What did I just say?" He asked in outrage.

Steve paused and looked outside, raising his eyebrows. "Well how else are we gonna..." Hopper raised his eyebrows, looking unimpressed, and Steve groaned in exasperation. "What, *you're* gonna drive?!"

"Seeing as I'm the only one with a license, yeah," Hopper threw back. He opened the door wider, a clear gesture, but Steve stayed put.

"Come on," Steve pleaded. "I turn sixteen in a couple months! The first thing I'm gonna do is get my license, I swear, I'm a good driver. You're a cop, that basically counts as a guardian, right?"

"Out," Hopper commanded, and Steve sighed and climbed out.

"If you scratch this car, my dad will sue you," Steve warned as he trudged over to the passenger's side.

"There it is."

3. February 1983

Steve pushed the door open to the bedroom, pausing when he saw Carol lounging on her bed with a magazine in her hands. She looked up at him, frowning when he just stood there.

“Hey sorry, just– bathroom? The downstairs one’s taken.” He nodded towards her own bathroom and she rolled her eyes, waving a hand.

“It’s all yours,” she responded nonchalantly. “Just don’t leave the damn seat up.”

He chuckled and slipped inside, not bothering to close the door as he relieved himself quickly. Carol just scoffed in response, muttering something about boys being gross, but he doubted she actually cared. They’d been friends for long enough at this point– she’d probably seen worse.

“Why are you hiding at your own party?” Steve called as he washed his hands, raising his eyebrows at her through the mirror. Carol rolled her eyes and didn’t respond, flipping through the magazine aimlessly.

“I bet Tommy’s looking for you,” he threw out, reaching for the towel.

“Tommy can go blow himself,” she shot back, turning a page in the magazine a bit too harshly, and he heard a small ripping sound. “Or, even better, he can get that skank Melissa Richards to do it for him.”

Steve huffed at that, amused in spite of himself. He turned around, leaning against the sink as he dried his hands. “Tommy doesn’t give a shit about Melissa Richards. You know that.”

“Sure,” she drew the word out as she sat up and threw the magazine aside. She looked at him, raising her eyebrows. “I don’t even care. We’re not together anymore.”

Steve rolled his eyes, tossing the towel back on the rack before walking over to her. Tommy and Carol broke up at least once a semester. He doubted it would last a week. “Whatever. Are you going back downstairs?”

“No,” she muttered, pressing her lips together in a thin line. “Not yet.”

Steve glanced at the door, frowning at the thought of missing out on the party. He knew that Becky Simms was waiting for him downstairs, and he'd really thought tonight would be the time to follow through on that. He grimaced at the idea of leaving her waiting. But Carol looked more upset than usual, and before he knew it he was sitting down beside her.

“Carol, Tommy’s an idiot. Has been since like the first grade. But he’s crazy about you.” Steve offered, trying to sound supportive. Carol glanced at him, considering the words.

“He doesn’t act like it,” she pouted, shoulders slumped.

“He’s probably just trying to make you jealous,” Steve said with a chuckle. Carol paused, looking at him again, and Steve frowned trying to figure out the look in her eyes.

“You know,” Carol said after a second, looking at him carefully. “You look like Tom Cruise in that jacket.”

Steve raised his eyebrows at her in surprise. Before he knew what was happening, Carol moved, swinging a leg over his lap and crashing their lips together.

She tasted like cherry lipgloss. Steve could barely think about anything else as she pressed against him, running her hands through his hair, her nails scraping lightly against his scalp.

He pulled her against him, reacting on instinct and opened his mouth against hers. Carol moaned and dragged her tongue against his lips, and the bright taste of bubblegum caused a light to go off in Steve’s head, and he broke away abruptly.

“Hold on, just... what are you doing?” Steve snapped, pushing her back slightly. She raised her eyebrows, perfect hair falling around her face.

“I would think you of all people would know what I’m doing,” she quipped back sarcastically, a smile on her lips. She leaned forward

again, and he could only stare at her in shock.

“Tommy—” he started, but she pressed a perfectly manicured finger to his lips.

“Shut up about Tommy. He’s downstairs getting wasted out of his mind. I doubt he even notices I’m gone.” She had a terrible smirk on her face as she pressed her lips back to his. Once again, he found himself kissing her back for a moment until he gathered his senses.

“Stop,” he growled as he pulled away from her. She stumbled off, finding her balance as she glared at him.

“What is your problem?” she snapped, flipping her hair over her shoulder.

“What’s *your* problem?” he asked back, getting to his feet. He ran a hand through his hair anxiously. “I’m not letting you cheat on my best friend with me.”

“It’s just *fun*. It’s not even technically cheating if we’re not together,” she drawled.

“Does *he* know you’re not together anymore?” He shot back, and Carol didn’t respond to that, just pressing her lips together instead. That was answer enough.

“God, Carol,” Steve snapped, getting to his feet. His mind was all over the place. “Sometimes you’re such a—”

“A what?” Carol challenged, raising her eyebrows.

“A slut,” Steve finished harshly, glaring at her. Carol scoffed and rolled her eyes, but Steve could see hurt in her expression, and he felt a small bite of shame. He took a deep breath. “Look, I don’t care what you and Tommy do in your free time. Just leave me out of it.”

He grabbed his jacket from the bed as Carol stared at him. “You’re such a hypocrite. It’s not like we haven’t done it before!”

He froze at that, eyes flying to her. He swallowed. “That was different,” he managed, looking away.

Carol laughed, a mocking, grating sound. "Yeah right. The only difference is that last time, you came onto me."

Steve glared at her, feeling slightly sick. He hadn't thought about that night in a long time, and he really didn't want to start now. "We shouldn't have done that, okay? Besides, we both agreed we weren't gonna talk about that again."

"Whatever," Carol drawled in annoyance, slipping off the bed. "But next time your dad calls you a disappointment or whatever find another shoulder to cry on."

They both froze at that, Steve in shock and anger, and Carol in caution, like she hadn't even realized the line she was crossing. They'd never talked about that night, and that was only due in part to the fact that she'd cheated on Tommy.

"Sorry, I shouldn't have..." she faded off, scrunching her face up, looking slightly guilty. "I didn't mean—"

"Whatever," he cut her off quickly, not wanting to listen to it. Pulling his jacket on, he yanked open the door to the bedroom and stalked downstairs. He heard Carol follow him, but he didn't look back.

Tommy was sprawled over the back of the couch, grinning slyly when he saw them. He was clearly drunk, but that didn't stop him from teasing. "You stealing my girl, Harrington?"

Steve forced a smirk onto his face as Carol flounced over to Tommy and slipped into his lap. She raised her eyebrows at Steve, and he ground his teeth together. "I've got plenty of my own, Tommy," he joked back, trying to keep things casual.

Tommy chuckled and turned to Carol. "Where's Melissa?" He heard Carol mutter.

"Who?" Tommy mumbled back, and Carol relaxed against him.

They swapped kisses for a long moment, and Steve felt sick as he watched them. He could see Becky watching him from the next room over, but he averted his eyes, looking around for a drink. He grabbed a beer from off the counter and took the last swig of it before tossing

it into the trash. It left a bitter taste in his mouth, but it still wasn't enough to cover up sickeningly sweet taste that been there before. He licked his lips unconsciously, frowning at the sticky traces of lip gloss that had been left behind. The same taste that Tommy was currently finding Carol's mouth.

"I'm going home," he muttered after a second.

After a long moment, Tommy broke away from his girlfriend's lips and frowned at him.

"What do you mean, you're going home? It's not even midnight," Tommy shot back, looking at him like he was crazy.

Steve could barely hold eye contact. "Yeah, well, I'm not in the mood. I'll see you guys on Monday."

"Whatever, man. You're fucking strange," Tommy tossed out, already distracted again by his girlfriend's lips. Steve clenched his teeth and accidentally bit the corner of his lips, wincing as he tasted blood.

As he walked out of the house and towards his car, he couldn't help but be a bit grateful. It was better than bubblegum.

4. March 1984

Steve exaggerated a lot when it came to his girlfriend, but one thing he knew was the absolute truth was that Nancy Wheeler had the most beautiful laugh in the whole world. He wasn't completely sure why that was or what made it so damn special, but he swore that no other sound could compare.

He had a feeling part of it was due to how little Nancy actually laughed. She'd grin at him constantly, laughter tucked away behind her teeth, or manage a small chuckle when she *really* couldn't believe him, but it wasn't the same as when she was breathless with laughter. Steve was addicted to that sound.

Today was a bad day. Steve knew it from the moment he saw Nancy at school, walking through the hallway with her head ducked and her hair falling into her face. He'd tried to cheer her up immediately,

plastering a grin on his face and throwing around stupid jokes, but all of her smiles had seemed fake.

She got this way sometimes. It was better than it had been a few months earlier, but Steve knew there were still days where she'd wake up with Barb on her mind, and those thoughts wouldn't go away for hours at a time.

She never laughed on days like this. Steve didn't blame her. He couldn't even imagine what she'd lost. But it hurt him to look at her sometimes, to see that pain in her eyes that he couldn't get rid of. He'd do anything to make her smile.

Which was why he was currently parked in her driveway, ready to do something stupid. He sat in his car, staring at the Wheeler house. The lights were on downstairs, but Steve could see the lamp shining from Nancy's window, and knew she was upstairs, probably lost in her work. He frowned, tapping the steering wheel anxiously.

He'd regret this. Probably sooner rather than later. But when he thought about the sadness laced into Nancy's voice that day... he could deal with a bit of regret if it meant making her smile.

He stuck the cassette tape in his car, waiting for the familiar song to play. He sighed, shaking his head at himself, before rolling down the windows and turning the stereo all the way up. *Just do it, Harrington.*

He climbed out of the car and leaned against the hood, waiting for the lyrics to start while he stared up at the window.

"Stranded at the drive-in, branded a fool," he sang loudly, slightly off-key. *"Wonder what they'll say Monday at school..."*

The front door opened, and Steve groaned internally as he saw Mike Wheeler and his friends sticking their heads out to watch. Nonetheless, he persisted, singing loudly along with the lyrics.

"Nancy, can't you see, I'm in misery!" He kept his eyes trained on her window, hoping she'd hear him sooner rather than later and put him out of his actual misery. *"We made a start, now we're apart..."*

He got through the entire first verse and chorus with no response

besides the kids and a couple neighbors, and he felt his confidence wavering.

The window opened at long last, and Steve grinned when Nancy stuck her head out from her bedroom. Her eyes were wide, and as soon as she saw Steve leaning against his car, her mouth opened in shock. He grinned at her, waving a hand to wave.

"Get in here before my dad turns on the sprinklers!" Nancy yelled over the music. Steve grinned and hopped down from the car, reaching inside to flip turn off the ignition before jogging towards the door. Mike and his friends were still standing in the doorway, giggling under their breath and staring at him in awe. Steve got the feeling it was more of a "I can't believe that guy's such an idiot" sort of awe than anything else, but no way he was going to be embarrassed by a few middle schoolers.

Steve grinned awkwardly at them, but they just kept laughing as they retired back into the basement. He took a moment to wave to Karen Wheeler, who looked like she was trying not to laugh at him, before sprinting up the stairs.

"Remember, door stays open!" Karen called after him. He was about to respond when Nancy opened her door and yanked him inside, leaving the door open a crack.

"Hey," he grinned.

Nancy's eyes were still wide, a disbelieving grin on her face. "I can't believe you did that."

"You like it?" He teased, laughing when she covered her face with her hands and leant against her bed frame. "You cut me off before I could finish."

"Don't you dare—"

"Love has flown, all alone, I sit and wonder why-y-y-y" he crooned quietly, leaning against the desk. He caught one her hands and used it to pull her against his chest before wrapping his arms around her waist. *"Why you left me, oh Nancy..."*

"This is a terrible song, Steve, oh my god," Nancy grinned, shaking her head.

"Well it was that or Hopelessly Devoted to You, but that wasn't in my range," he grinned at her.

"You make a pretty okay Zuko," she admitted, a teasing smile on her lips.

"That makes you Sandy, right?" He asked, raising his eyebrows expectantly.

Nancy rolled her eyes, leaning against his chest. "You just want to see me in those leather pants."

He shrugged, still smiling. "I'm not gonna lie, I think you'd look pretty hot."

Nancy laughed lightly, and Steve felt his heart clench at the sound. "You're such a..." she paused, considering, and Steve chuckled. He leaned down, kissing her neck as he offered suggestions.

"Great singer?" He mumbled against her skin, feeling a burst of happiness when she giggled. "Amazing boyfriend?"

"I was actually stuck between idiot and moron," she threw back, a smile evident in her voice. He pulled back and kissed her chastely.

"You love me, really," he muttered smugly against her lips, and she chuckled softly as she kissed him back. Her hands came up to frame his face, and he sighed into it, pulling her even closer. They swapped kissed for a long moment, the sound of lips and sighs the only thing in his mind.

As they kissed, Steve let his hands wander around her waist. After a second, he pulled her shirt up slightly, untucking it from her skirt and slid his hands underneath, skimming across smooth skin. A shiver ran up Nancy's spine at the touch, and a terrible thought suddenly occurred to him.

After a second of holding her close, he broke away, smiling down at her. There was a moment of peaceful silence, and then—

“Oh my god, Steve, I’m going to kill you!” Nancy managed through desperate giggles. Steve kept grinning at her as he tickled her. Her laugh filled the room, and he felt on top of the world. She hit his chest repeatedly, trying to shove him away, but he persisted when he saw the happy look in her eyes.

Her laughter was contagious, and he found himself cracking up as he continued to tickle her.

“Steve, Steve, stop,” Nancy gasped at last, breathing quickly, and he pulled his hands away finally. She leaned against his chest tiredly, a wide smile on her face as she punched him lightly.

He grinned down at her as she wiped the tears from her eyes, small laughs escaping her. Those breathless laughs were the most beautiful sound he’d ever heard, and Steve leaned down and stole a kiss before he could stop himself.

Nancy curled her hand around his jaw, fingers playing absentmindedly with the hair at the nape of his neck. She smiled at him, that tight-lipped look like she couldn’t believe how ridiculous he was. He would have stayed there for the rest of the night, just like that, but she glanced down at the watch on her wrist, and the smile slipped off.

“Shit,” she sighed, hand slipping down. “I really do have a paper to write, Steve.”

She said the words slowly, nose scrunched up and eyes filled with guilt. He felt a spark of disappointment in his chest, but he held up his hands in defense anyway.

“Hey, I get it,” he assured her. He nodded to the door. “I’ll get out of your hair.”

She bit her lip. “I mean, you could stay for dinner—”

He kissed the corner of her mouth gently. “Don’t worry about it. My mom wants me home for dinner anyway.”

His mother had said no such thing, but he knew his girlfriend well enough to tell when she was lying. She needed space and time to

focus, and he'd respect that. She gave a small sad smile and stepped back, smoothing her shirt down.

"I'll see you tomorrow?" She asked unsurely. Steve nodded, tucking a piece of hair behind her ear before smiling and slipping out of the room.

He was almost to the stairs when Nancy called his name and he turned around. She was peeking out her room, hands curled around the frame of the door.

"Thanks," she whispered, a smile playing on her lips, and he grinned.

5. November 1984

"This is pointless, dude," Steve said, flopping back onto Jonathan's carpet. Jonathan looked at him lazily from where he was lounging on his bed.

"I thought you wanted to get high," Jonathan replied, raising his eyebrows lazily. Steve glared at him.

"I did. I *do*. But it's not working." Steve shot back. He fished into his pocket and wrapped his fingers around the pack of Marlboro's there before grabbing the lighter that Jonathan had thrown on his bedside table.

"Do you have to do that in here?" Jonathan asked, narrowing his eyes at the cigarette dangling between Steve's lip. Steve stopped, glaring at him.

"Dude, your whole bedroom already reeks of weed. I don't think one cigarette is gonna make much of a difference." Steve muttered, already lighting up. "Smells better anyway."

"You're probably just doing it wrong," Jonathan mumbled, looking back up at the ceiling, air drumming to whatever song was playing over the stereo.

"There's only so many ways to do it," Steve shot back, feeling the nicotine already race through his lungs. "I told you. Sometimes it just

doesn't work for people."

Jonathan didn't say anything for a moment before he looked over, sitting up. "Well that's stupid. You can't just give up."

Steve rolled his eyes. "I'll just stick to my brownies."

"That's not the same," Jonathan protested, and Steve had to roll his eyes at that. "We'll try again. Hold on."

He grabbed a small bag and a piece of rolling paper, sitting up to lean over his bedside table.

"Isn't your mom gonna get mad when she smells all this smoke?" Steve asked as he watched Jonathan carefully roll another joint on the wood table. He'd rarely seen the other boy concentrate as much as he was right then, focusing on the paper like it was one of his photographs.

"No," Jonathan said with a shrug, not taking his eyes off of the task at hand. "She smokes almost as much as I do. We just don't talk about it."

Steve watched in something close to awe as Jonathan carefully licked the edge of the paper and folded it carefully over before rolling the end gently. Jonathan gave a small satisfied smile before slipping off the bed and crawling over to him.

Steve waited patiently for whatever Jonathan was going to do, watching him boredly. He liked stoned Jonathan. He moved slower and less cautiously, and didn't look like the slightest touch would make him jump out of his skin. Steve wished he looked like that more.

Jonathan reached over, snatching the cigarette that was dangling from Steve's lips, stubbing it out on his shoe before tossing it the wastepaper basket. Steve stared at it, frowning. "What was that for?" He asked, slightly offended, but Jonathan didn't answer.

"You ready?" Jonathan asked, but Steve was distracted by the way that he immediately brought the joint to his lips, taking a long inhale.

“What?” Steve asked after Jonathan lowered his hand, but Jonathan didn’t answer. Keeping his lips closed, he curled a hand around the back of Steve’s neck, bringing their lips within centimeters of each other.

Jonathan exhaled and Steve reared back slightly on instinct, but Jonathan kept a gentle but strong grip on his neck, keeping him close. Steve could only follow his lead, parting his lips and inhaling as Jonathan breathed out slowly. Steve took a deep breath, feeling the smoke travel to his lungs, keeping it all in inside his chest.

When all the smoke had transferred to Steve, Jonathan pulled back slowly, raising his eyebrows. “How do you feel?” he asked, his voice low and inquisitive.

Steve felt his cheeks warm at the question, not sure how to possibly respond to that, when he realized that Jonathan was referring to the high instead of the fact that he almost kissed Steve.

Steve swallowed, his mouth feeling much too dry. “Try it again?” he asked before he knew what he was saying.

If Jonathan thought it was weird, he didn’t let on, already raising the joint to his lips again.

This time Steve was ready, already parting his lips before Jonathan exhaled. It felt never ending, more smoke than he’d anticipated, but he barely noticed as it travelled into his lungs. All of his senses were fixed on the boy sitting across from him.

The smoke had gone, but Jonathan was still there, centimeters away. If he leaned forward the slightest bit, they’d be touching, they’d be *kissing*... so that’s what he did.

Jonathan didn’t pull back like Steve thought he might. He made a small sound of surprise, but stayed still, their knees knocking together and smoke curling around them. Jonathan’s hand was still curled around his jaw, and Steve realized his own hands were resting on Jonathan’s thighs.

Jonathan was the first to pull back, staring at Steve with wide eyes,

pink enough to match the blush on his cheeks. For the first time in about ten years, Steve found himself thinking about Elliot Kowalski and the kiss behind the portable.

Jonathan opened his mouth, and Steve frowned, wondering what he was going to say, but instead, he just began to laugh, a happy, light sound that Steve still wasn't quite used to. Steve waited a pause before a similar laugh bubbled out of his own chest. He let his head drop to Jonathan's shoulder and they continued to giggle against each other for a long moment.

Jonathan's neck was warm, as was the rest of his body. The warm air from the open windows had settled upon their skin as a thin layer of sweat. He'd never been this close to Jonathan before, and it was all he could think about.

He felt Jonathan raise his arm to take another hit, and he leaned his head against Steve's as he exhaled into the air. Steve closed his eyes, still leaning against the other boy and took a slow breath. The smell of weed had faded into the background of his mind, and he suddenly found himself picking up on Jonathan's scent more than anything. He could smell his shampoo, some scent he couldn't place. It was easier with Nancy— her soap was just strawberry or lemon or something normal like that. Men's shampoos were weird. Steve didn't know what the fuck "mountain" was supposed to smell like, but it probably wasn't whatever Jonathan smelled like.

"Are you smelling me?" Jonathan asked, and Steve paused, realizing that yes, that's exactly what he was doing. He didn't know how to explain that though, so he didn't respond, just giving a one-shoulder shrug. "Okay."

Jonathan let him stay like that for a long time, as Steve slowly relaxed into the slight high he'd managed to gain in the past few minutes. Jonathan eventually pushed him off, and they both settled against the floor, staring up at the ceiling and listening to the music playing on the stereo.

"Time may change me, but I can't change time—" Steve sang the words quietly, nodding along with the music. Jonathan kicked him.

"It's 'I can't trace time'," Jonathan corrected. Steve lifted up his head to look at him, frowning in thought.

"No it's not."

"Yes it is."

"No it's not."

"Yes it is," Jonathan huffed, kicking him again, and Steve gave in, letting his head flop back down. He didn't think that made any sense, but he wasn't going to fight Jonathan on David Bowie, of all things.

"It's kinda weird, isn't it?" Steve asked after a second, or maybe after an hour. He wasn't sure. "That we're here, getting high in your room, when last year we were trying to kill each other? But we're like.... *here*, you know? Like we fought a *monster*. And we won. And now we're like... *friends*."

Jonathan didn't reply, and Steve turned his head to look at him. He was blinking repeatedly, as if trying to focus on something. "Jonathan," he said, stressing the word and causing the other boy to startle and look at him.

"What'd you say?" Jonathan asked, his eyes wide and his lips parted.

Steve blinked, frowning. "I dunno."

Jonathan smiled slowly, a chuckle escaping his lips. "Okay, Steve."

Steve grinned back at him before staring back up at the ceiling, letting the sound of the music and the smell of smoke wash over him.

+ 1. January 1985

Steve groaned after having yet another sneezing fit which made his head pound in agony. He sniffled pathetically and buried deeper into his couch, keeping his eyes fixed on the television. The bright images and sounds honestly weren't making him feel any better, but he desperately needed a distraction.

The show cut to commercials and Steve sighed. He'd been watching TV all day and had gotten to the point where he knew the words to each advertisement.

"Have a double good time, have a double great day," He sang along groggily to the gum commercial. *"Double your pleasure, the double-mint way--"*

There was a knock at the door, and Steve sighed again before pushing himself up off the couch. He groaned when he felt the fluids in his sinuses shift and make him dizzy. He paused to rub at his eyes before getting up and crossing to the front door, trying to make himself presentable before pulling it open.

Jonathan and Nancy blinked at him before breaking into identical grins. Steve lost his grip on the door, and his arm fell pathetically to his side as he stared at the pair of them in surprise.

"Hey," Nancy greeted casually.

"Are you parents home?" Jonathan asked, adjusting the backpack strap on his shoulder. Steve frowned, shaking his head. Jonathan kept talking. "Are they coming home soon?"

Steve shook his head again, and they both relaxed at that.

"Perfect," Nancy said.

Steve blinked at them, glanced at his watch, and then looked back at them. "Aren't you guys supposed to be in calculus right now?"

"Screw calculus," Nancy said, a smile on her face that meant she was up to something. She pushed past him and made her way through the living room.

Steve stared at her and turned back to Jonathan, who was waiting politely. He offered a small smile, sticking his hands in his jean pockets.

"You guys are skipping?" Steve asked, still confused.

Jonathan ducked his head, snorting quietly. "It was Nancy's idea."

Steve didn't know what to say to that, but Jonathan was already walking past him into the house, following behind Nancy. After a second, Steve shook himself and closed the door, walking back into the living room. He looked around, embarrassed by all of the tissues lying around on the floor, but they didn't even seem to notice.

"What are you watching?" Nancy asked, setting her bag down on the floor and keeping her eyes on the television, which was playing an old car commercial.

"Uh, Miami Vice reruns," Steve answered with a frown.

Jonathan huffed. "This show is terrible. I don't know why you watch it," he threw out, but hopped onto the couch anyway and got comfortable.

Steve just stared at them. "Is this some weird fever dream?" He asked after a second.

Nancy and Jonathan both chuckled at him. "No," Nancy answered simply, patting the open cushion between them. "Are you just gonna stand there or are you gonna join us?"

Steve's feet responded before his mind did, his thoughts still muddy and confused with exhaustion and sick. He stumbled over to the couch and fell on the cushion beside them both who smiled at him before looking back to the TV. Nancy leaned back and picked her feet up, laying them over Jonathan's and Steve's legs.

"I just... why are you guys here?" Steve asked, still slightly stunned.

"We missed you," Nancy answered, not looking at him.

"You would do the same for us," Jonathan pointed out. "You *have* done the same for us."

Steve frowned, wanting to point out that he was always ready to skip school, and it wasn't much of an inconvenience for him to miss a few classes to hang out with his favorite people. But then the show came back on and Jonathan was shushing him before he could say anything else. He smiled slightly at them, feeling calmer as he relaxed into the couch.

After a while of watching the show, Steve leant his head against Jonathan's shoulder, feeling his head become more muddled. He'd already seen this episode anyway– he didn't need to pay that much attention. Jonathan laid a hand on Steve's thigh, rubbing up and down in a source of comfort.

"I've missed you," Steve mumbled, pressing his lips to Jonathan's shoulder. He heard Jonathan chuckle quietly.

"Missed you too," Jonathan whispered back.

Steve lifted his head, pressing his nose into Jonathan's cheek and taking as deep of a breath as he could with his stuffed up nose.

Jonathan pushed him away slightly and raised an eyebrow when Steve pouted at him. "Steve, stop it."

Steve drew back, outraged. "What? I haven't seen you in days and you're not even going to kiss me?"

"Not now," Jonathan answered easily. "Just because you had to go get sick doesn't mean I should too."

"Jon," Steve drew out the name loudly, and Nancy kicked him.

"Stop talking," Nancy complained and Steve threw her a look.

"He won't kiss me," Steve complained, leaning against his girlfriend instead.

"Good, he shouldn't," Nancy threw back, unconcerned. "You're sick."

"No, I'm not!" he protested, though it was weakened slightly by the sneeze that followed. Great timing.

Nancy chuckled slightly, patting his head absentmindedly. "Okay Steve," she answered back, and he glared at her. After a second he pulled his legs up and threw them over her, falling back hard against Jonathan's lap and redirecting his attention to the television.

"You guys suck," Steve whined as he squirmed around to get comfortable. "I'm gonna sneeze all over your backpack."

Nancy laughed and grabbed his socked foot, stilling his movements. Steve kept pouting, but after a moment he sighed and decided to just go with it. He pressed closer to them both, and he saw them both smile at him before watching the show.

He hadn't been lying before. He had missed them. He'd only gone a few days since this shitty illness had caught up with them and he'd had to stay away from them, but it had felt like forever. They'd somehow weaved themselves into the fabric of his lives in the last year, and their absence had been louder than he'd anticipated.

Steve felt his eyes grow heavy as he listened to the upbeat music play and Nancy slowly moved her hands against his feet. He'd been exhausted all day— something about lying on a couch alone for six hours tended to do that— but he hadn't been able to relax completely until now.

He startled slightly when he felt a weight on his head. He opened his eyes, only to see Jonathan smiling down at him hesitantly, his hand petting Steve gently. Steve gave him a sleepy grin and put his head back down. Nancy always like to tease him about how he reminded her of a cat sometimes, but he couldn't blame her, seeing as he was practically purring as Jonathan ran his fingers through his hair. Jonathan was rarely physically affectionate like this, but Steve loved it when he was.

Despite the ache in his head and his runny nose, it was the best he'd felt in a while, and before he knew it, he'd drifted off to sleep.

He didn't dream, which was a relief, seeing as his dreams tended to get pretty weird when he was sick. When he did open his eyes, he wasn't sure what time it was, and it took him a moment to orient himself.

Steve opened his eyes narrowly, peeking through his eyelashes. The television's volume had been turned all the way down, most likely due to him falling asleep. His eyes drifted up to Jonathan and Nancy, who were leaning over him, lips locked and hands curling around each other's heads.

They looked beautiful when they kissed, melting together, wrapped

around each other like there was nothing else there. His house always felt so cold and empty, but they made it look infinitely brighter. He watched them for a long time, more content than he thought was possible.

He felt himself slowly growing tired again, eyes fluttering shut before blinking open again. He had nothing to do for the rest of the afternoon, so he allowed himself to grow tired. But something was missing, and he realized why he'd woken up in the first place.

He cleared his throat, hitting head against Jonathan's thigh lightly. They broke apart, looking at him in surprise, but he just looked at Jonathan with raised eyebrows. After a second, his boyfriend chuckled, returning one of his hands to thread through Steve's hair. Steve smirked, and Nancy laughed gently before continuing to kiss Jonathan.

Steve closed his eyes and focused his attention on the hand that Jonathan was still carding through his hair.

He would kiss them tomorrow, and the day after that, and the day after that, and every day for as long as they'd let him. But for now, this was enough.

Author's Note:

Hope you enjoyed! I love 5 + 1 fics, but this was the first one I've written, and honestly it was so much fun :) I'll probably end up doing more.

If you enjoyed it, please please please comment and leave kudos! Or come talk to me on [tumblr!](#)